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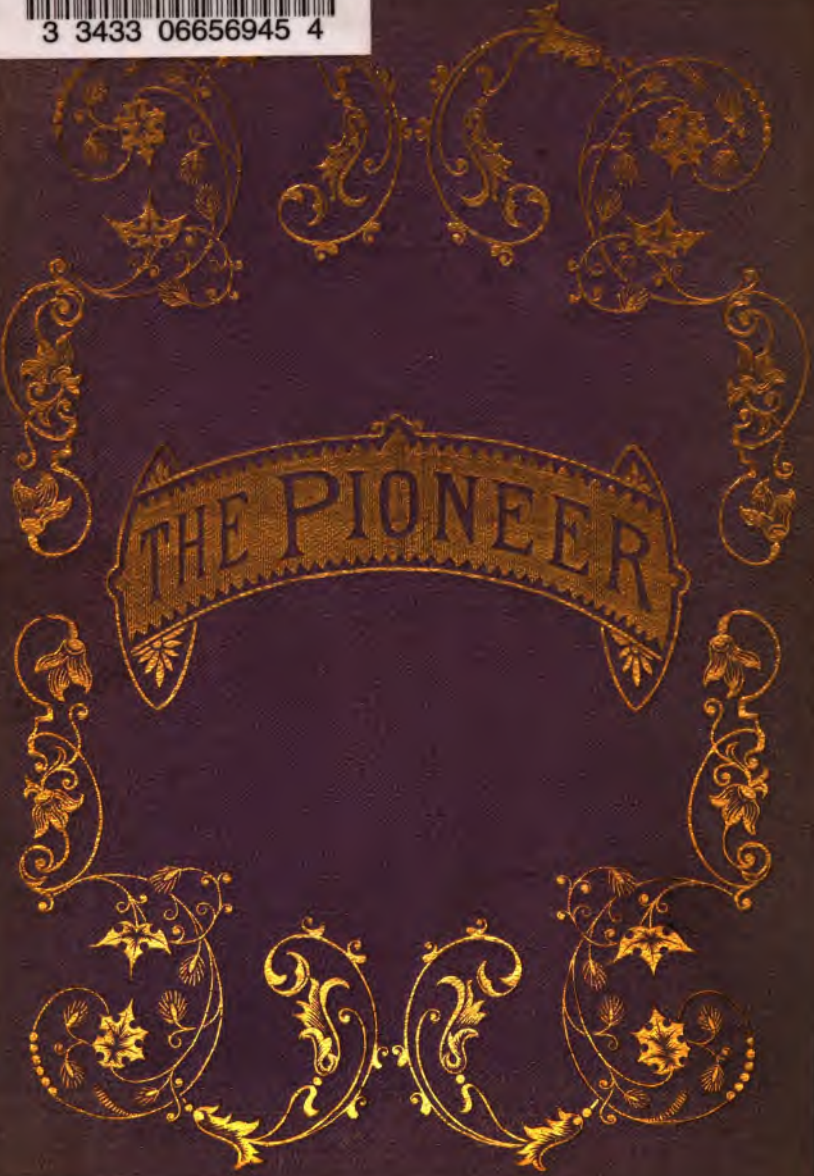
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An elaborate gold-tooled border on a dark purple background. It features symmetrical, swirling acanthus leaves and floral motifs that frame the central title. The design is reminiscent of late 19th-century decorative arts.

THE PIONEER

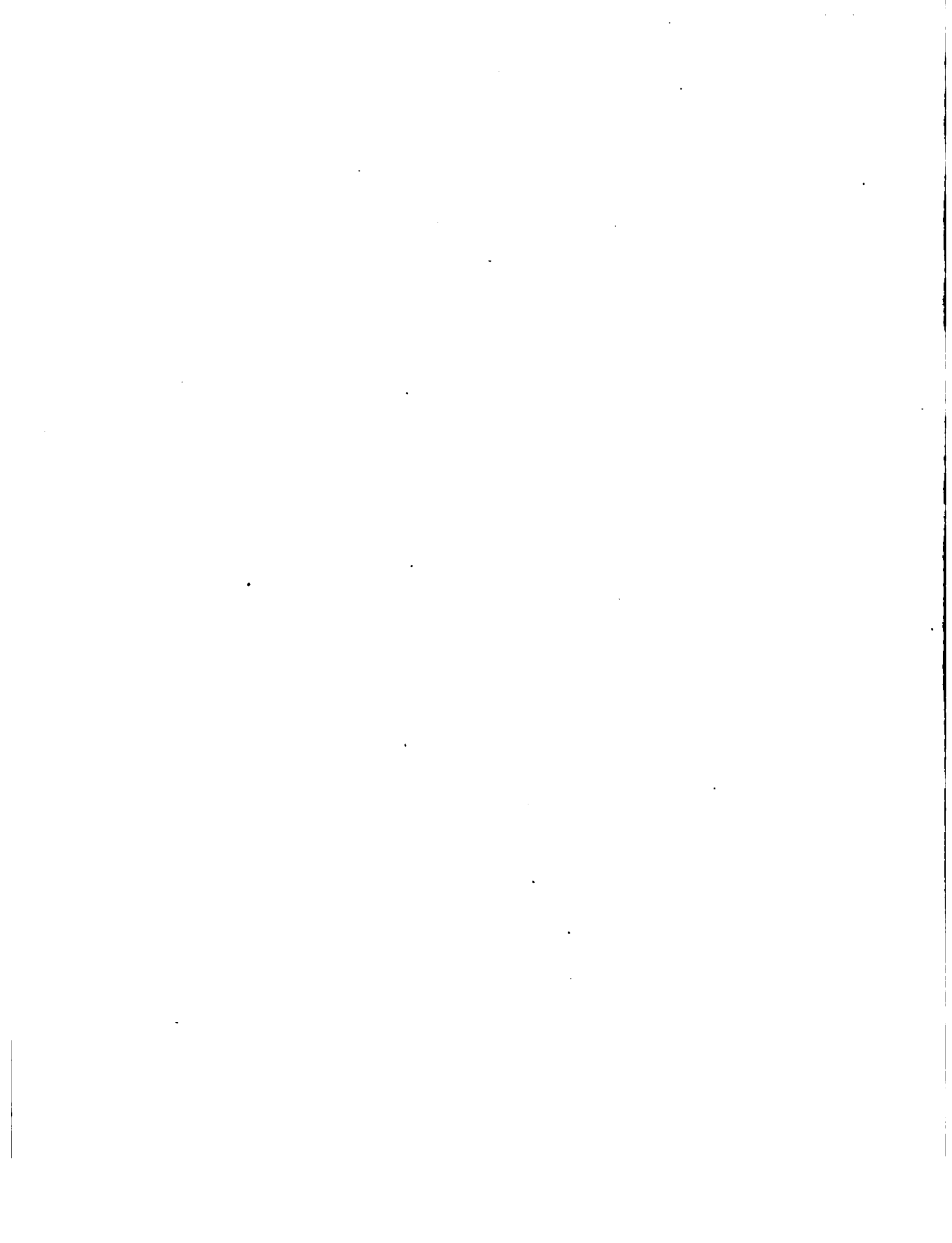
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1. Poetry, American

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THE PIONEER.

A POEM.

BY

WILLIAM SETON, Esq.,

Author of "Romance of the Charter Oak," "Pride of Lexington," etc.

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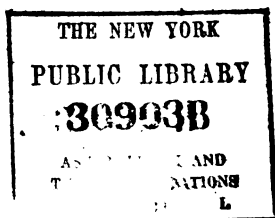
"Westward the Course of Empire takes its way."

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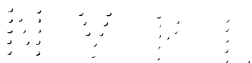
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THE PIONEER.



IN the loveliest valley of New Hampshire,
Hard by a stream whose fountain home is hid
Among the Laurel crags of Mount Kearsarge,
A cabin stood. Upon its sloping roof
Old Time had spread the moss ; its chimney leaned
A little to the South, bent by the blasts,
Which in the winter months, with scarce a pause,
Blew down with fury from the cold Nor'west.
Under its eaves the Marten's nest was hung ;
The Woodchuck had his den beneath the floor,
Where generations of them came and went—
Blessing a spot which was the haunt of Peace.
Around the acres which the axe had cleared

(5)



The melancholy Pines a circle formed ;
And in the clearing, 'tween the stumps and stones,
Josiah Willey raised his scanty crop
Of corn and pumpkins,—blunting many a hoe,—
And often wond'ring how he ever came
To settle in the shadow of the hill.
Yet was Josiah, in his faithful spouse,
Blest with a treasure such as few men find.
Her temper kindly, and her willing hand
Was never idle from a lack of health :
Broom, churn, and spinning-wheel, the livelong day,
Kept steady chorus to her tuneful voice ;
And in the evenings, when his work was done,
She'd place her 'specs' upon her drooping nose,
And read him off to sleep with Holy Writ ;
Then rouse him from his dream with some sweet hymn
Which would recall the day when first they met—
A Sabbath, in the choir at Intervale.
And as a cherished flower doth grow more fair,
And bloom each season with a sweeter breath,
So, with the passing years, Josiah thought
His mate more beautiful than in her teens :
For when a soul to soul is truly wed
There is no ending of the honey-moon.

One night in May, just when the Dogwood buds
Unfolded, and the Marten on her nest
Laid her last egg, Josiah Willey's home
Was blest with twins. And, from the beginning,
Helen and Martha grew what you'd expect
Ought to grow up from such a parent stem.
Yet better were they—for all goodness tends
To betterment ; often on earth we find
Virtue rewarded by a fairer mould :
So in their rustic beauty was revealed
The father and the mother's Godly lives.
Nor did they ought to mar kind Nature's gifts :
Their feet uncramp'd, their waists no fetters bound,
And in their faultless symmetry of form
You might have taken them for works of art
Come from Immortal Greece. Their joyous looks
Told of the mountain air, the azure sky
Mirrored in their eyes its heavenly blue,
And the wild roses which their cheeks adorned,
Bloomed all the year. Yet 'tis not clay alone
Which makes true worth : shell is but shell, the pearl
Doth lie within. So in their gentle breasts
Love and obedience reigned. With willing hands
They helped their mother in the household work ;

And in the winter months the path which led
Through the dark pine wood to the District School
Did never miss their step. The merry crowd,
Who came together with their books and slates,
Much wondered at their quickness. Day by day
Helen and Martha, from the lowest bench,
Moved nearer to the front ; and many a boy,
Destined in time to play a Statesman's part,
Would whisper to them—" Tell me what comes next ;"
And by their friendly aid escape the rod.
At length, in course of time, the District School
Was taught by Helen—though 'twas often said
That Martha came instead ; yet none could tell—
The twins were so alike—which really came.
But all agreed the school was ne'er so good ;
The roughest boy obeyed, and meekly took
The chiding for his faults ; and Helen's reign
Was long remembered as the Golden age.

Fair was the vista which these years spread out
Before Josiah Willey, blind Josiah !
The babbling brook that hurried by his door,
The impatient broods which left the Marten's nest,
Taught him no lesson. 'Twas an April day ;

The vale was clear of snow, though on the top
Of rugged Kearsarge lingered still a wreath ;
Winter's last gift before He said good-bye.
Spring was in the air, the soft breeze told it ;
The early violets, sheltered by the rock,
Smiled to the sunbeams and the gallant bee,
Who came to pay them court, gave each a kiss.
All nature was alive this April day.
Josiah Willey felt the joyous change.
His wife did feel it too, and by his side
She told him of her plans,—he told her his :
“ More corn I'll raise this year than e'er before,”
Stroking his tangled beard as he spoke.
“ I'll churn more butter,” quoth the faithful spouse,
“ And with the money which we two can save
We'll give our daughters each a bran new gown.”
“ Aye, gowns and earrings,—anything you like.
They are such blessings ; between them and you
This humble cabin is a Paradise.”
“ But you should hire help to clear the farm
Of stumps and stones. Why toil thus alone ?
The land is sterile and it wears you out.”
At which Josiah frowned : “ No hand but mine
Shall cultivate this clearing ; not a man

Shall cross my fence to play with hoe and spade—
I'm worth an army of your hired louts."
"Alas!" when he had spoken, sighed his mate—
"He fears the gallant swains of Intervale.
Yet oh how vain to think such twins as mine
Can slip the nets which daring youths will spread
To catch them. I am sure the miller's son
Doth go to meeting just to hear them sing.
So too the blacksmith, and the mill and forge
May turn out Presidents for aught we know.
Bah! let them come, my daughters would not choose
Ungodly men; they have a right to wed.
And what is more, they ne'er had seen the light
Unless an am'rous swain had wedded me."

While thus she mused, from out the cabin door,
Her golden hair loose flowing in the breeze,
And moving with the joyous step of youth,
Came Helen. Full was the jug she carried
Of pungent cider made from apples wild,
Which Martha and she had gathered in the hills.
"Drink father!" she said, drawing out the cob
And filling to the brim an earthen mug.
"Drink to the Spring time! I could fly to-day;

The Blue bird over head is calling me."
But here she paused ; her parents wondered why.
The hand which held the cup seemed petrified.
Fixed was her gaze, while on her startled face
A look of pleasure wrestled with a blush.
Lo ! peeping o'er the fence which ran close by
Was one she knew not, and her father frowned
When turning he beheld a stranger nigh.
But heeding not his frown and with a spring,
Which took him over with a foot to spare,
The youth approached, and pushing from his brow
The coonskin cap, he fixed his eagle eye
Full on the maiden ; then with grateful smile
Stole from her willing hand the cider mug.

If all the crags,—if every beetling cliff
Had tumbled from Mount Kearsarge to its base,
Josiah Willey would have scarcely been
More thunderstricken. And his wife—though she
Inward rejoiced—did think that Helen might
Have better let her father sip the draught.

" Fair maiden," spoke the youth, " methought I'd seen
All that was lovely in the Saco Vale.

The bee finds nothing new, but I have found
Something which cannot in the world be matched :
Oh, here's to thee ! " Then as he drained the cup,
Josiah Willey's face grew like a cloud,
And from his lips fierce mutterings were heard.
While Helen, like an early flower of spring
Which dares to lift its head above the snow,
Quivered a little ; but her sparkling eye
The whisper of her heart too plainly told,
The roses on her cheeks grew deeper red,
And never did she look so sweet before.
" An idle hour I meant to while away
Angling for trout," went on the enamored swain,
Turning to Josiah : " but if you allow
I'll stay and gather up this ample crop
Of stones, which in New Hampshire never fail
T'outstrip the corn. Aye, will I toil for thee
And violate my spirit's yearning voice,
Which bids me move toward the setting sun."
" I need no help," and as Josiah spoke
He waved his daughter to the cabin door,
Much wondering where the other twin might be.

Martha was fond of strolling up the brook.

The wolf might meet her ; but he hid his fear
And vowed the stream was fishéd bare of fish,
And that a friend who dwelt across the mount
Was sore in need of help.

Without reply

The youth went back to where he'd left his rod.
But sport had vanished : from the glancing tide
A face peeped up. And though the waters rushed
Swiftly away, the vision did not go.
Here it might sink beneath the dancing foam,
Anon a whirlpool carried it from view,
But in a moment it would come again
Frightening the trout, and to the fisher's eye
All things were dim but Helen Willey's face.
Thus on he wandered further in the wild ;
Ascending slowly, narrower grew the stream,
And sweet like childhood's babble was its voice
Answering the solemn murmur of the pines.
Its home was near. Aye, with a laurel bush
Half hiding it from view, yonder the fount,
The mellow sunbeams resting on the moss
Which lines its border, and a happy frog
Basking in the glory of high noontide ;
For at no other hour the sunbeams come

Down through the tangled cover of the wood.
It was the very spot to stop and muse
And listen to the silence. And the youth,
Reclining on a rock, did watch the rill
Stealing away among the fallen leaves,
A tiny silver thread, you'd scarce believe
That such a little thing could reach the sea.

While thus he rested, tired by his walk—
For he had come from far Chicorua—*
A joyous voice the sleeping echoes woke.
“Who can it be that sings such merry song?
No sweeter music could an angel give.
Oh might it be the maiden whom I met
Down in the valley?” thought the enchanted youth,
Listening with all his ears. Nearer it came,
Louder the dead leaves rustled, and his heart
With tender throbbings flew to meet the voice.
“Aye, it is she! who else could be so like?
What happy Providence has led her here?”
He said, when presently she appeared in view
Holding a bunch of violets in her hand,
And with her eye fixed on a squirrel's nest,

* Chicorua, a mountain ten miles west of Mount Kearsarge.

So that she saw him not. "Oh, Lord be praised
For such good luck!" he cried. "I little thought
In this retired spot we'd meet again."

At which mysterious and sudden greeting
Down fell the violets, and Martha stopped
And gazed upon him with a frightened look.

"Why, maiden, I'm the one to whom you gave
The cup of cider; do not run away.

You're far from home, but you are safe with me."

And as he spoke he hastened to her side,
And with no ceremony grasped her hand.

"We ne'er have met before," Martha replied,
Trying to free herself; but his firm grip
Retained her.

"Ne'er before? Oh, tease me not!

Who but yourself did give me that sweet draught
Down in the valley? I'm not dreaming—no!

Once seen, your image cannot be forgot.

And if—oh if you'd only come with me
To the far West how happy should I be!"

Here was a pause, and Martha, who divined

It was her sister he was speaking of,

Half envied Helen. Then with an arch look

She told him his mistake, and on her chin

Laid her soft finger : " By this mark alone
We differ, in all else we are the same."
" A beauty spot ! Oh, verily I wish
I were that freckle in its dimple bed,"
Exclaimed the youth ; then letting go her hand,
" Tell me, fair maiden, will you be my bride ? "
" Fickle swain, you've soon forgotten Helen.
Martha is willing, but you met her first.
All that I am and better too is she."
" But you are here while she is in the vale,
Under her father's shadow," spoke the youth.
" Well, who be you that craves me for his bride ?
More weighty bargain never can be made.
'Tis fair to me to tell me who you are ;
This is a season when your arm should be
Laboring at the plow, not idling here :
A Fisherman forsooth without a fish ! "
" Ah ! blame me not for having empty creel
When your twin image haunted all the stream,
Nor am I idler, but in this poor soil
Work is rewarded by a crop of stones.
A native of these hills, I long to tread
The rolling prairies of the far far West,
And having sold my farm methought I'd wait

Just long enough to find a lass like you
To keep me company."

" Well, wait a day,

Or better three ; so I may break the news
Gently to my father, who will murmur
At my going. Still in his eyes I am
A little child. Oh, I've a happy home !
Yet happy as it is, what once I was
I am not now. Then when three days have passed
Come to the cabin, and I trust he will
Smile on us both. His very love will say,
' 'Tis for the better, Martha, you may go. ' "

With this they separated ; all forgot
The violets were which dropped from Martha's hand ;
And when she reached her home it seemed to her
The hours since morning were a century.

II.

At even * Helen told about the youth
Whom she had seen in the early morning hours :
“He was good-looking, Martha, and unless
My eye deceiveth me he'll make his mark.
Bold and hawk-sighted, restless, full of life,
I wondered at his offering to stay
And be a menial on this sterile land.
Perhaps—” but here she blushed and whispering spoke
The rest of what she thought ; at which a tint
Of deeper red spread over Martha's cheek.
It was too plain that Helen was in love ;
And shrinking to dispel her cherished hopes,
Nor daring yet to meet her father's frown,
Martha retired to visit in a dream
The lonely fountain nestled in the hill.

It was a starless night, the full moon rolled
Mistress of the sky ; the wind was sleeping,
Yet from the forest came a solemn voice,

* That evening.

And never in the day the trout stream gave
Such a loud answer to the murmuring pines.
It was too fine a night for all to sleep :
The woodchuck left his den beneath the floor,
And from his hollow tree the sly raccoon
Came forth to pay a visit to the roost,
Where, balanced on one leg, the happy cock,
With one eye open, dozed beside the hens.
But nearer than the fence he durst not go ;
For lo ! a man was piling up the stones
In little pyramids about the field.
And there with patience, through the moonlit hours,
The youth did labor, thinking all the while
Of the twin sisters in the cabin near.
Nor ceased his toil till from the glorious East
Aurora came to drive away the night.

“ Do eyes deceive me ? ” were Josiah’s words,
When, stepping from his door, he first espied
The stony heaps—“ Ho ! mother, what is this ? ”
Then quickly to his side his wife repaired,
Four pretty bare feet pattering at her heels ;
And Martha and Helen wondered full as much

THE PIONEER.

As did their parents. Not a single one
Guessed that the mystery was a work of love.

A score of times throughout this April day
Did Helen turn to watch the forest edge.
“ He may return, dear sister, think you not ? ”
But Martha’s heart was wandering up the stream,
Far far up to where she dropt the flowers.
She scarcely spoke a solitary word,
And sorely did she struggle with herself.
She loved her sister more than tongue can tell :
“ He met her first,” she sighed, “ for Helen’s sake
I’ll dupe him. When he comes I’ll make believe
’Twas she to whom he opened out his heart.
Hawk-sighted though he be he’ll not discern
The tell-tale freckle buried in my chin.”

All through the sunny hours the father plowed,
Scanning with jealous eye the circling wood :
“ The wolf may try once more to steal my lamb ;
’Twas not the cider that he cared about.
Ah ! Ho ! a happy thought ! ” at which he stopped,
And leaning on his plow did deeply muse,
A finger on his nose, his thin lips pressed

Firmly together ; " aye, I'll watch to-night.
'Twas he, no doubt, who piled up all these stones,
Hoping to bend me by such useful work.
Well, verily, 'twas cute." Then called his wife
And to her said : " The mystery is solved."
At which, with tender words, his loving mate
Did plead for Helen : " Saw you not," she asked,
" How feverish she looked at morning meal ?
And nothing ate. Remember, at her age
'Tis natural to yearn for other love
Than home-love. Should he, therefore, come again,
Cross-question him, and if you find he hath
Religion—if he seems a Godly youth,
Why, let our darling wed him if she like."

Thus did the day pass by, and Martha still
Held back the secret trembling on her lips :
" Morrow—to-morrow," were the last low words
She murmured to herself, while Helen lay
Beside her on the couch. Then gentle sleep
Pressed down their eyelids, and chaste night concealed
A pair of roses changed to buds again.

They both were dreaming ; in each others' arms

Unconscious whispers told the hidden love,
When softly in the room the father came ;
And bending over them Josiah heard
What startled him indeed—" Lo ! one doth speak
Of meeting with a youth far in the wild
And pledging him her troth ; while Helen prates
In sentimental strain about the wolf
Who dared to cross my fence the other day.
Alas ! alas ! am I to lose them both ?
Be left in my gray hairs without my twins ? "

Thus sighing back he went again,
Half hidden by the shadow of the house,
Upon a stump, and there to wait and watch.
Above him, 'neath the eaves, the Marten slept.
The very stillness made him drowsy too,
And yawning at the moon he half resolved
To hie into his nest beside his mate.
Just then from out the wood a figure came,
The very one he long had waited for,
And boldly at his task the youth began ;
Stone after stone he gathered up until
Josiah challenged : " Halt ! a word I pray ;
Unloose thy tongue and tell what brings thee here."

“To do what Jacob once for Laban did.
To win fair Rachel faithfully he served ;
So will I toil for thee until I win
My Rachel,” spoke the youth in manly tone.
“I like square talk, thou art not mealy mouthed,”
Returned Josiah : “let me call my wife.
We’ll question thee a mite and then we’ll see.”

In homespun shawl well wrapped soon out she came,
Shivering in the moonlight, and her lips
Muttering ‘Old Hundred,’ for she much rejoiced
To think she soon might have a son-in-law.
“He’s not ill-looking, give me the first word,”
She whispered, putting on her spectacles,
Which made her seem more wise ; then cleared her
throat.

“First, what’s your name ?” she asked. “Nat Putnam,
dame.”

“Have you religion ?” “Aye, a year ago
I was converted at Camp-meeting.” “Good !
And do you drink ?” “Aye, milk and cider, dame.
Rum only once has ever touched my lips ;
’Twas when it was so cold the cider froze.”
Here ceased her questions and her mate began :

"Tell me, Nat Putnam, can you shoe a horse?"
"So well the shoes stay on him till he dies,
And blacksmiths hate me for I harm the trade."
"And what else can you do?" "I can exhort;
My tongue and spirit move in harmony.
In fact, there's nothing from a doctor's pill
To Sabbath sermon that I cannot make.
I am a useful man, and lucky she
Who quits her maiden name to take my own."
"I doubt it not; but lucky too the man
Who gets my Helen; she's a perfect gem.
Up with the dawn, she spins and churns and bakes;
This shawl I wear was made by her own hands.
And never was the District School so good
As when she kept it; nor in all her life,
Except with children's ailments, has she been
The least unwell," the loving mother said
In earnest tone.

"Helen—Helen—Helen!"

Murmured the youth. "Oh can that be the one?
The name escapes me." "Better than a mine
Of diamonds is the girl you seek to wed,"
Exclaimed Josiah. "But if she says Yea,
I'll not say Nay. And now as it is late,

The moon has crossed the vale, I offer you
A shelter in my cabin ; with the morn
You'll have a chance to ask her what she will."
With lovesick heart and sorely puzzled brain—
For of the twins he knew not one apart ;
The freckle was no guide hid where it was—
Nat Putnam entered 'neath the humble roof,
But sleep he could not, and the ancient clock,
Which kept him company, did seem to hold
The hours from going faster than they should.
But morning came at last : the Robin first
Awoke the Marten, then bold Chanticleer
Sent challenge to a rival far away ;
And many a homestead in the Saco vale
Took up the reveille and passed it on.

Quick Martha rose and flew to greet the morn,
While Helen waited to put on her robe.
Upon the threshold joyfully she stood,
Nor was it till Nat Putnam's ecstasy
Broke forth in loud huzza she spied him out.
"Oh flee not ! hear me ! what is there to fear ?
Thy half-veiled loveliness would shame a blush.
What whiter stocking could a maiden wear

Than Nature's own upon thy naked foot ?
And Paradise might envy all the rest
Thy tell-tale garb reveals," exclaimed the youth.
Then while she trembled at her father's step—
Coming he was, her mother too she heard—
Full on her cheek he pressed his burning lips
And in that moment all the world did fade,
All to Nat Putnam vanished but the lass
Before him trembling in her loveliness.
Yet which one was it? Ah! he did not know.
The stricken Helen peeping from her room—
Poor lily broken by the sudden storm—
She might have told him. But she only sighed
And moaned—"Alack-a-day! my love is lost."
"Well done, Nat Putnam! so the bargain's made,"
Cried out Josiah—"and you are to stay
To be my strong right arm in my old age."
"'Tis not the twin we meant him for to have,"
The mother whispered. "Aye, it is." "Oh, nay!"
"Well, Yea or Nay—too late—so let 'em be.
'Tis not so foggy as you think it is.
I wager she has met the youth before ;
Aye, in her sleep last night she told me so."

Then leaning on the arm of her betrothed,
For faint she was, the blushing Martha spoke :
All—all she told with shame and joy and grief ;
And while her bounding heart in smiles broke out,
Her blue eye moistened at poor Helen's face,
From which the rose of morn had died away.
Then to her sister's arms quick Martha flew :
“ Can you forgive me ? ” “ Verily, I can.
To have you mated well is speechless joy.
You'll love him too for me, and that will make
A load of love as much as he can bear,”
Said Helen, laughing through her tears. At which,
“ Praise God from whom all blessings flow ” was sung.
All joined, and never did the cabin ring
With such sweet music as this April morn.

III.

“ Well, such is life ! ” were poor Josiah's words.
Twice seven days since Martha was betrothed :
“ We build the nest, then off the wee ones fly,
As if to mock us for the pains we take

To keep them home. Well, well, so must it be.
Only the rocks are fixed, all else doth change,
And fool is he who builds upon this life."

While musing thus his friends of Intervale
Dropped in to bid farewell to Putnam's bride ;
For Martha now was wedded and resigned
To go where Putnam went, and he was bound
To leave New Hampshire for the far, far West.
In one by one with solemn mien they came ;
The blacksmith first, still sweating from the forge,
The miller with his beard all white with flour,
The doctor with a wan and hollow cheek—
For in the Saco vale no pills were used ;
The folks lived on until their hundredth year,
And without patients he must needs grow thin.
Then came a little man with twinkling eye,
Who smelt of herrings, for he kept the store ;
And next to him a face which seemed to be
In search of sinners, that it might lament.
But this was only sham, for none could tell
A better story than the Parson could,
Nor at a husking sing more jovial song.

Disposed in semicircle round the room,
The wreaths ascending from their corn-cob pipes,
To mingle with the fragrant catnip leaves,
The liverwort and tansy overhead,
Which all good housewives keep in homes like this,
A group they formed peculiar to the land
Where town-meetings do play the part of kings,
And where the precious plant of Saxon growth
Doth bear the fruit of Witenagemote.
First Putnam spoke: "My friends, I'm going far,
But ere I bid farewell, I fain would ask
What doth possess ye to remain just like
The crags of Kearsarge, fixed upon one spot?
There is no elbow-room among these hills.
Come with me to the west, where prairies roll
Without a rock as far as eye can see;
Where Bison range in never-ending droves,
And from the wilderness we'll carve a state
Worth ten New Hampshires gathered into one."

"The idea is good," returned the brawny smith;
"I'm tired of shoeing nags." "And so am I
Of hearing all day long the clattering wheel,"
Exclaimed the miller. "And could I sell out

And make a profit, I'd be willing too
To quit old Intervale," rejoined the one
Who smelt of herrings. "But the trouble is
No fool will buy us out," the doctor sighed.
"My garden patch is all doth keep me 'live ;
But how the beans grow up among the stones
Is miracle indeed. Who'd have such land ?
E'en for a gift it would be dearly got.
But for those beans and that I chance to have
A standing patient in the miller's wife,
I long ago of hunger should have died ;
And her 'Rheumatics' may be gone too soon."

"Well, in the West ye all might start anew,"
Continued Putnam. "Aye, the doctor might
Try law or preaching—" here his words stopped short ;
All eyes were turned towards the open door
Where stood a wagon with gigantic top
Of snow-white canvas ; fastened to the rear
A coop, which might contain a score of hens,
While underneath the coop a bucket swung.
Then in a mournful tone the smith thus spoke
To Martha, at whose side poor Helen wept :
"No more at meeting shall we hear thy voice,

Singing the hymns, sweet angel of the choir.
But thou shalt not depart without a mark
Of our warm friendship : I for thee have made
Yon wagon. With its broad and lofty top,
Seen from afar upon the western plain,
'Twill bear resemblance to a bark at sea :
So call it *Prairie Schooner*."

 " And I give
Five sacks of flour, better ne'er was ground,
Stored in the wagon with the other gifts,"
The miller said. " And I a herring-box,
Some pins and clothes-lines and nine bars of soap,"
Quoth he with twinkling eye.

 " And I enough
Quinine to keep the Ague long at bay,"
The doctor said.

 " A Psalm Book is my gift,
And may the forests ring with words of praise,"
Spoke out the man of God, when all but him
Had told what they had brought to show their love :
" May angels hover by thy wagon trail,
And safely as the *Mayflower* crossed the sea,
Thy *Prairie Schooner* bring to anchorage."

With this the circle rose and solemnly
Shook hands with Martha, then passed out the door
And with low hearts went back to Intervale.

IV.

Few hours this night did either twin repose,
And all too swift the clock called out the time.
How different when it came the rosy dawn
From what it had been ! And the Robin's voice
How sad it sounded into Martha's ear !
'Twas the last sunrise she would see at home ;
The West was breaking, and an unknown charm,
A halo as of Heaven, seemed to fall
Upon each object that her eye beheld.
The very spider which her broom had doomed
Was now a friend, and not for all the world
Would she have swept him from his airy bed ;
Nor harmed the mouse which ran across the hearth
To tell the cricket come and bid good-bye.

All was prepared, the neighing steeds betrayed

Impatience to be off—they little knew
It was a journey of a thousand miles.
On came the sun and when his glorious beams
Flashed o'er the valley, Putnam said—" 'Tis time."
Then hand in hand, with grief too deep for words,
Helen and Martha left the cabin door.
Josiah followed silently and slow,
A rifle resting on his arm, which he
Gave unto Putnam : " Pray the Lord," he said,
" You'll need it only for your venison ;
Yet is it well to have a friend like it
To lean upon should Indians trouble you."
" And I do give you this," the mother said,
Placing in Martha's hand an ancient book.
" Long before my day its sacred pages
Cheered our forefathers on the desolate shore
Of Plymouth. May this Bible be a link
To bind your western home to Mount Kearsarge."

Then silence came, and often in its voice
There is more eloquence than tongue can speak.
Soul whispers unto soul, and Putnam felt
As ne'er before the deed which he had done :
Willing, 'tis true, was Martha to depart ;

Yet deep into the home-earth lay the roots
Of the sweet flower which he called his own,
And pain it was to tear them up.

But now

It must be done, the whip's sharp crack resounds,
One burst of grief—and off the wagon moves.
Through the dark pine wood to the turnpike road,
By the old school house rapidly it went ;
Familiar landmarks stared on every side
And well-known voices called a last good-bye.
But Putnam would not wait for shake of hand :
“ No, Martha, no,” he said, “ the anchor's heaved,
The Prairie Schooner stays for nothing now.”
Then, without murmur, Martha bowed her head
Upon his shoulder ; “ Wrong it is,” she said,
“ To weep ; I chose the part and I must have
Friend, father, mother, sister—all in thee.”

V.

One eve in June—'twas early in the month,
Just when the Locusts had begun to sing,
And in full bloom the forest trees were decked,
A wagon, with a pair of bony nags,
And creaking wheels and weather battered top,
Stopped at a cabin in a mountain notch.

"Where am I?" asked Nat Putnam of a youth
In deer robes clad and taller than himself,
Who stood beside the door. No answer came,
Until again he spoke; and hardly then,
For wonder at the pretty Martha's face,
Could words unseal the happy hunter's lips.
"Upon the Blue Ridge," said the youth; "methink
Thou comest from far,—thy wagon needs repose.
Accept my home as thine, be master till
It pleaseth thee to journey further West."

"Oh, do," sighed Martha. "For awhile," quoth Nat,
"Until thy limbs are rested, but no more,

Then on we go to seek the Prairie land."
With this he helped her down ; and, oh how sweet
To enter 'neath a cabin roof again !
It made her think of home. But desolate
The cabin was—no clock, no shelf, no book ;
No cricket chirped. " Alone I pass my days
Here," spoke the hunter, " for I love the wild."
Then in a whisper—" Till I saw thy face
I loved it. But, alas ! all now is changed.
What have I lost by hiding from the world !
His sister ? "

" Nay, his bride," at which a sigh
Escaped the youth : " Oh, better had it been
Had she not crossed my path ; a memory now
Will stay when she is gone, and day and night,
In dreams and waking hours, I'll see her face ;
But like a shadow it will flit away."
Well Martha knew the reason of his sigh,
And in her mind a plot for Helen wove.
It seemed a Providence that she had met
The hunter ; and to Putnam told her thoughts,
Who smiled, and said : " Aye, do it, Martha, do it."

Then, with a merry heart and nimble hand,

She pounded corn enough to make a cake ;
And wrought it with such skill, that not in years
The hunter had he tasted such a meal.
“Oh, tantalizing one !” the latter said,
Low in her ear, “each hour thou dost stay
Thy worth in brighter light reveals : I would
Go round the world to find a match to thee.”
Which Martha answered with a look so sweet,
The youth rose up, and left the cabin door,
Beating his brow. Then Martha called him back,
And, in a voice all music, spoke of home,
And asked if he a letter there would bring :
“’Tis far,” she said, “but I will thank thee much.”
“No thanks ! command, and off I go,” he cried,
“And never to this cabin will return—
Ghost-haunted spot ! ’Tis hateful to me now.”
“Hateful ?” And Martha, as she spoke the word,
Laughed merrily ; then raised her voice and sang,
And far into the twilight held him bound
As in a trance. And with such witchery
She wrought upon him, that, when sleep at length
Pressed down her weary eyes, the hunter stood
Watching the heavens from the cabin door—
And all the summer night he spellbound watched.

When morning came her husband said—" 'Tis time."
Nor pleaded Martha for a longer rest ;
But with—" God speed thee, hunter, on thy way,"
Sent him with tidings to the Saco vale ;
Then cheerily she took her place again
Upon the wagon seat, and off they went ;—
The compass guiding through primeval woods,
The giant trees moss-covered on the North,
The wild grass growing in the Openings,
Home of the deer too innocent to flee ;—
And so for many days it was a park
More beautiful than human hand can make ;
And Martha wondered that her spouse should leave
Such land behind him. But he shook his head :
" I could not halt, my Blessing, if I would ;
Beyond the Wabash is my Canaan."

And so they journeyed on, and on, and on ;
The patient Martha reckoning the days
With notches on a stick ; she half believed
It was her destiny to chase the sun
Around the globe till she got home again.

At length, one evening, on a gentle knoll,

Where they did think to camp, the forest ceased ;
And lo ! before them, like a boundless sea
Fired by the setting sun, the prairie lay !
Quick Putnam rose, and, flinging from his hand
The worn-out reins, cried—"Glory ! here we are !"
"Praise God ! Praise God !" cried Martha, as the tears
Of purest joy gushed from her dark-blue eyes ;
Then, when he went to free the haggard team,
Fell on her knees, and offered up a prayer.
And never was Thanksgiving more sincere ;
And never twilight closed on happier scene—
The Prairie Schooner safe in port at last,
From her long voyage of a thousand miles.

VI.

It was a pleasure not to be described—
The building of the cabin. Peep of day
Saw both astir. While yet the Whippoorwill
His weird song was singing, Nat's sharp axe
Rang clear and loud, and woke the sleeping Grouse ;
And round him in the air an Eagle flew,

Wondering who dared disturb the ancient tree
Where centuries of Eagles had been born.
Then, with the sun's first beams, away the mist—
Ghost of the night—departed from the plain,
Where neighed the tethered steeds ; for round them lay
A herd of Bison in the glittering dew—
Nature's own diamonds, shaken by the breeze
Which came to Martha laden with the breath
Of myriad flowers. "It is Paradise
Awakening from summer night's repose !"
She cried, as from her work she turned to view
This glorious vision of a Western morn.

"Oh, here is elbow-room !" said happy Nat,
At noon returning for the chaste repast
She had prepared for him from scanty means.
And more than ever did he feel how much
He leaned upon her. If she looked to him
For strength in danger, more to him she was :
The corner-stone of all he meant to build ;
Life's battle was a play with her to cheer ;
And now in this wild spot the future shone
Bright as the day upon the prairie edge.
"Aye, elbow-room for all our friends," she said.

"I know they'll come." "Fools if they don't, my love.
I feel already that I've grown an inch
Since here I anchored."

"And we'll build our home
Just like the old one, and, if you have time,
Put up a meeting-house and district school,
So pedagogue and parson may begin
Their work without delay when they arrive."
"And what else, Martha?" laughing as he spoke :
Then in a graver tone, "'Tis prophecy ;
I feel it in my bones, I hear the tread
Of thousands coming."

"And I thank the Lord
That my dear husband is the pioneer."

With such light hearts the work went bravely on :
Nat busy cutting logs, while Martha's hand
Planted the corn ; there was no time to lose—
The summer soon would pass, the frost arrive ;
And she was helpmate in the truest sense,
And Putnam wondered what he should have done
Without her.

In a little while the house
Took shape and form ; thatched with wild grass the roof ;

Between the logs moist earth ; a chimney built
Wide like the old one Martha loved so much,
Down which the stars might twinkle, and a seat
Placed in it for the cozy winter nights.
Nothing was wanting but a clock, which she
Told to her husband ; but he only smiled,
Then set to work, and lo ! to her surprise,
He made a clock, the oddest she had seen,
With horseshoe pendulum and funny voice,
Between a chuckle and a groan it was ;
It made her laugh to hear it counting time
And telling fibs each hour of the day.

One morn when Putnam, seated by her side,
Was listening to her read the Inspired Book—
It was the Sabbath—at the door appeared
A stranger of the race which they had oft
Heard spoken of, but never seen before.
The plumes of Eagle in his hair were twined,
Around his neck the claws of grizzly bear,
While from his tattooed breast and shoulders hung
A tomahawk, and bow with quiver full
Of slender arrows pointed with a flint.
Startled they were by such a visitor,

And Putnam's eye upon his rifle turned,
And Martha dropped the Book.

“ Oh, Paleface, why
Do you fear me ? welcome to my broad domain !
Welcome ! “ And Blackhawk, as he spoke, held out
His hand towards them. Then they shook his hand,
And like old friends they were ; and presently
Were strolling with him to the patch of corn
Which Martha planted. “ It is small,” he said ;
“ And with the frost's first bite will wither up.
But in my wigwam I have plenty stored ;
Come take what ye may need.” “ Thanks, we will come.”
And Putnam thought the Indian wondrous kind ;
A Christian could not be more generous.

But when they stood upon the spot which once
The ancient tree had shaded with its limbs,
The tree where Eagles for a thousand years
Had built their eyrie, Blackhawk bowed his head
And groaned, and muttered words so very sad,
That Martha asked what harm had come to him.
“ A prophet once—far in the days of old—
Did plant an acorn here,” the Chief replied.
“ And from it sprang an Oak—‘ Long as it lives

My tribe will live'—the Seer did prophecy.

"The tree is gone ; there's Evil on the wing.

Oh, Paleface, tell me why hast thou done this ?"

" Oh, blame him not," said Martha, for she saw

His eyes in anger turn upon her spouse.

"To give me shelter he cut down the tree.

Had he but known it was so dear to thee

His axe would not have touched it."

" It is done,"

Went on the Chief ; "forget I never can,

Forgive I do, and from my store of corn

Will plenty give to prove I am a friend.

But now good-bye ; 'twere better that I go

In solitude awhile to mourn the fate

The prophet prophesied in days of old."

With this he left them. And this Sabbath day

Martha was sad. "To think that my new home,

Where I may pass so many happy years,

Was little while ago a lordly oak :

Landmark from the plain for many a mile,

Home of the Eagle, and an Indian' seer

Had made it sacred to his tribe—alas !

Would I might bring the tree to life again,"

She sighed. Then Putnam spoke : " It has to be.
I did not tell him so, but he is doomed ;
Aye, with the Bison, Blackhawk must depart."

VII.

Upon the Prairie edge, like Martha's home,
The Indian village stood. Half round it flowed
A stream which westward, through the tall grass, made
A silver pathway for the birch canoe :
Haunt of the Beaver, who spun out his days,
Till he was gray, upon its happy shore.
The voice of enemy had never broke
The quiet of the spot. From age to age
The wigwams of the tribe had nestled here ;
And near them was a mound, where all as one
In harmony together slept the dead.

When Martha and Putnam visited the Chief
They found him sad ; yet nothing did he breathe
Of what had troubled him the day before.
But others than himself had missed the tree,

And silent was the village, for the fate
Predicted by the Prophet seemed at hand.
Surrounded by the other wigwams stood
His own ; of strips of bark the roof ; for door
The skin of Panther. And within it sat
A maiden working at a moccasin.
“ The only child now left,” and Blackhawk took
His daughter’s hand and pressed it as he spoke.
Then with a brighter look ; “ but waiting us
Are many in the Happy Hunting Ground.
Upon its Prairies flowers ever bloom ;
No snow, no biting wind, the sweet blue sky
Ever above them. Would that we were there ! ”

Martha, who knew what weighed upon his soul,
Now half regretted—fair as was the spot
Where they had settled—that their wagon trail
Had come so near this quiet Indian home.
The plough would soon uproot it ; in the Spring
New Intervale would hold a meeting here
To plant the seed corn of another state.
Then while her husband filled his wagon full
Of golden maize and robes of Bison—gifts
Which made him stare—how very generous !

She talked with Blackhawk's child, and said, "we must
Be best of friends and see each other oft."

Then to the cabin back they slowly went ;
Nat smiling at the thought of days to come :
" A mill upon this stream, a busy forge,
A store and school house ; aye, there's elbow-room
For all New Hampshire, if they follow me,"
He said, as o'er the plain he cast his eye ;
Burrowing in the Future deep and far,
No sentimental thought to trouble him.

VIII.

Happy it was for Putnam and his bride
To find such welcome : every Summer day
The Indian maiden came to visit them.
Wild honey, and fish speared by her father's spear,
She brought ; and Martha loved her more and more
Thus happy flew the days of Summer by.
Then Autumn came, and with the falling leaf
The Whippoorwill departed ; in the air

Were warning sounds ; on every shivering tree
The Katydid lamented ; from the clouds
The wild goose sent his melancholy note,
As from the Arctic zone he winged his way
To where Magnolias bloom.

But Putnam's axe
Had made a store of Hickory to last
Till Spring returned ; and grinning, he exclaimed,
"Let Winter come!"

At length grim Winter came.
Down from the North his line of battle swept,
And for three days all bowed before his might.
No living thing did dare to venture out,
To face the blinding snow, the piercing gale.
The bear retreated to his hollow tree,
Which groaned and threatened to uproot and fly ;
The wolf was silent in his hungry den ;
And Martha wondered if the cabin would
Stay fastened to the earth.

But three days o'er,
Upon the horizon a speck of blue
Appeared ; it was the sky—the sweet blue sky,
Growing each moment larger to the view ;
And as the sun went down he sent a flash

Across the snow drifts, rolling on the plain
Like ocean billows. In another hour
Martha looked up the chimney and espied
A twinkling star. "The night is fine," she said,
"But, oh, how cold!" Then Putnam wrapped her well
In Bison robe, and laid her by the hearth;
Then piled the hickory upon the fire,
And while she slept he watched and kept the blaze
A rushing up the chimney like a stream:
Scorching his knees and face, yet even so
His back was freezing. Then he turned around
And faced the frost until his back was scorched,
And thus till morning whiled away the hours.
But when the clock struck twelve he knew 'twas six
(The time-piece chuckled at the fib it told);
"Thank God!" he cried, "the sun is not far off."

Then Martha, waking, told him of a dream
Which she had had about old Intervale:
"The folks were bustling to and fro," she said;
"The doctor tearing up his patch of beans;
The miller to his mill did cry 'adieu';
The torge was silent, and the blacksmith wore
A parson's neck-tie, while the parson was

Singing Old Hundred, on a frisky nag.
Then came dear father, with the hunter's arm
Entwined in his. And Helen, too, I saw ;
And mother, with a crowd of other dames,
Each with a bundle. What a funny dream !"
"It signifies a move ; they're coming West,"
Said Putnam. "There is more than folks believe
In these night visions, when the Spirit takes
A holiday awhile to go and see
Things far away."

With this he left his mate
To trim her plumes disordered in her sleep,
And to the door repaired to view the day.
But lo ! when on its hinges, with a creak,—
A woful creak, as if it was in pain,—
The door came open, what did he behold ?
A marble wall which barred the outer world !
And when he touched it with his hand it gave
No sign of breaking ; like a rock it stood.
"Snowed in ! Snowed in !" he cried, "Oh, where's the
spade ?
The pick ? The crowbar ? I will make short work
Of Winter's mean attempt to prison us."

But 'twas not easy, for the snowdrift lay,
Just as the wind had piled it, like a wave
Checked in a tempest by a reef; and far
Upon the cabin roof the billow curled.
Yet nothing daunted, to the task he went
Cheered on by Martha's voice, and soon the sweat,
As if it was Summer, trickled down his face.
He growled, he laughed; then laughed and growled
again,
And Martha fancied once she heard an oath.
On, on he toiled. At length—"hurrah!" he cried,
"I see the sky." Then in a little while
The sunbeams shimmered in; a tree appeared,
Ice crystals sparkling from its naked limbs;
Then soon the horizon lay all in view,
The Prairie looking like a frozen sea.
But not a breath of wind, all calm and still
Except the snow-birds chirping by the door.
"Well, that was work!" said Putnam, as he stood
Rubbing his brow. "I have no little mind
To cut an opening in the roof, and so
Outwit old Winter if he tries again
To shut us in."

"A good idea! But now

I wonder if the snow will bear your weight,"
Said Martha. "It is deep; oh, very deep.
'Twill try your legs to go five steps away."
At which he laughed, then with a single bound
He scattered all the snow-birds, and before
She could restrain his pranks, he was stuck fast
In snow above his waist, and there he stuck,
Grinning and saying, "This is jolly fun!"

Here Martha smiled and left him to his joy.
Then when the birds flew back—they soon returned,
And, tamed by hunger, to her feet they hopped—
She scattered crumbs to them, and watched them feed.
But soon she felt a tingling in her ears,
And just in time retired from the door;
And would have closed it, but that he called out,
"It is not cold; oh, Martha, fie on you!"

But by and by, while busy at the hearth,
Making a corn-cake for the morning meal,
She saw him enter with a nose like wax.
"Frost-bitten hard!" she cried. "Keep from the fire!"
"You're joking!" "Nay!" then quick she fetched
some snow

And pressed it to his nose, while Putnam felt
As if he had not any. But at length
He felt as if he had, and more than one ;
And in each nose a thousand needles pricked.
While from his eyes the tears came rolling down,
For it was martyrdom. He stamped his foot,
And when the cake was baked he could not eat,
Nor scarcely heeded Martha's loving kiss.

But evil worse than this Jack Frost can do :
Nat's ears could come to life ! but when at length
A pathway to the barn—if so you might
Call the frail shelter for the horses built—
Was opened with much labor, lo ! he found
The gallant rooster dead upon his perch,
Which was too near an opening in the logs,
And like a pall the snow-flakes covered him.
Oh, blame not Martha if she heaved a sigh
When Putnam threw him on the cabin floor ;
You might have thought a stone had dropped, so hard
The cold had made the flesh and blood which once
Had been the Champion Cock of Intervale.
“ I knew the hen that hatched thee, noble bird !
I watched the brood and chose thee from the lot.

Good chicks they were, but thou best chick of all,"
She said ; and if a tear did dim her eye,
Oh, blame her not ; it seemed as though a link
Which bound her to the past had snapped apart.
Nor could she tear her thoughts away from home,
For still she called the cabin by the brook—
Which rose among the crags of Mount Kearsarge—
By that heart-clinging name, and wondered if
The vision she had had might e'er come true.
Oh, how she longed for Spring ! far off it seemed,
Oh, very far, as things we long for do :
" But it will come," she said, " and may it lead
Along our wagon-trail the ones I love."
" Cheer up," spoke Putnam, jaying on her head
His horny hand ; " here comes the Indian maid
Walking on snow-shoes, let her see you smile.
Sighing won't bring the rooster back to life,
Nor time fly faster for your wishing it.
So merry be !"

Obedient to his voice,
She greeted Blackhawk's daughter with a smile.
And presently the chieftain followed her,
Bringing a deer which he had slain that morn.
And bountiful the meal at noon spread out :

Persimmon sweetmeats, venison, and bread
Of corn-flour made—a dinner for a king.
And happy were the snow-birds at the door ;
And happy she who scattered to them crumbs,
While on a tree close by a hungry crow
Lamented he was not a snow-bird too.

IX.

Monotonous the days of Winter were
To Putnam more than Martha. Up and down
The cabin he would pace, much like a bear
Imprisoned in a cage and chafing at
His idleness, for Winter held him bound :
Nothing to do except to take the clock
Apart ; then mending it, again undo,
And make his wife half fear his wits were gone.

'Tis said that woman lacks the brain of man.
Let her be thankful ; in her narrow sphere
She finds contentment. Angel of the hearth,
Martha did not chafe at Winter's bars.

No spider-web as yet provoked her eye,
No mouse gave anxious thought about the meal ;
Still faithfully her broomstick went the rounds,
And topsy-turvy every blessed day
The little household turned. Then all again
Would come to rights beneath her fairy hand ;
While Putnam sighed—"it has to be endured."
Then humming a sweet tune her needle plied,
Ensconced in the chimney, with her foot
Upon the back-log, while the hickory blaze
Made furious battle with the frost above.

The chieftain's daughter was a welcome guest,
And with her in the chimney often sat,
Listening to the wolf, who came at night
To howl his hunger at the cabin door.
Pleasure it was to teach the Indian maid
The word of Holy Writ, and Martha hoped
Great things of what she taught, and to herself
Planned how to give religion to the tribe.
"Why should they disappear? Here is their home.
God made the prairie for the Red man too,"
She said.

And so the Winter days dragged by,

One like the other, till the hickory pile
Shrunk to a size that you might count the sticks.
But sweet it was to watch the twilight grow,
The sun rise earlier, while the Blue-bird's voice
In February fell on Putnam's ear
Like heavenly music, for it told of Spring.
"Old Winter's back is broken," he exclaimed,
"I dreamed last night about my plough. I saw
The furrows stretching far into the plain.
I heard you blow the noon-day horn, and when
I reached the cabin door you greeted me
First with a kiss, then in my arms you placed
A picture of yourself—a pretty babe!"
And Martha laughed to hear his funny dream.

Then March came in—loud, blustering, windy March ;
While Winter sullenly his mantle drew
Around him, and went scowling to the North,
Far to his iceberg home to rest awhile ;
Dropping a snow-flake, as he went away,
Upon the cabin roof. And Putnam hailed,
As does a mariner the sight of land,
The prairie. Where the frozen sea had been
The Bison reappeared, and joy it was

For his poor steeds to stretch again their limbs,
And nibble at the grass. Again he heard
The goose, returning from the sunny South.
But dearest sound of all to Martha's ear,
The peeping of the frogs, 'twas so like home,
Where many a time she'd heard them by the brook—
It seemed to her there was no brook but it
In all the world.

Then Putnam stroked his plough,
And spoke to it; perhaps it understood,
For smiling he went off to fetch the team.
Then to the prairie all together moved,
Impatient to begin. And to and fro
(No crooked lines, but straight as arrow flight)
The furrows ran. The startled grouse flew up,
Then lit and flew again, and by his hole
The Prairie dog sat watching anxiously;
And many a one before the evening came
Was rooted up. For so it has to be:
What here is ruin is another's good—
There is a ploughshare coming for us all,
And many a joy will rest upon our bones.
This evening happy Nat his hammer plied,
Making a tiny box, while Martha sat

Wondering at his skill. He whistled, too,
A merry tune she had not heard before.
Then when the box was made she asked him what
The little thing might be ; it puzzled her.
Said he—" a cradle—always look ahead."

X.

Six months have passed since from the cabin door
The Prairie schooner went, and many a time
Has old Josiah rested on his plough
To watch the West. For him the setting sun
Has now a charm it did not have before,
And when it dipped below the horizon
He sighed—" God bless her ! " Helen only once
Has been to Intervale ; and then she walked
With downcast eye, and quick her errand did ;
Then home returned to mourn. The goodwife too
Has not the spirits that she used to have,
And when at night a thunder-storm rolled by
She wakened from her sleep, and breathed a prayer
For Martha travelling in the wilderness.

'Tis Indian Summer ; in the Saco vale
The rainbow colors rest upon the woods,
A taint of smoke floats in the hazy air,
And not a sound except the Blue Jay's voice
Among the chestnuts, or the solemn tap
Of some lost Woodpecker. The corn, which once
Threw silken banners to the summer breeze,
Bows down its golden head. The pumpkin twines
No more in envy round the withered stalk :
The crib is waiting, and the hungry rat
Will feast on both. The busy housewife's hand
Doth know no rest ; Thanksgiving-day is nigh ;
The turkey gobbles to his mate and says,
" We all must play our part to praise the Lord."
But in Josiah's cabin not a sign
Of joy and feasting. Nor will Helen go
To sing at meeting on that hallowed day,
Though twice the blacksmith and the miller's son
Have sent petition that she may be there.

One evening when the lamp had just been lit,
And slyly from his hole the mouse had crept
To greet the cricket chirping on the hearth,
Where Helen's spinning-wheel was humming round,

A knock was heard upon the cabin door.
"Come in," Josiah growled—then thrust again
The corn-cob pipe between his lips. "Come in,"
Was hardly uttered, when a stranger stepped
Across the threshold ; then like one amazed
By some strange sight, he halted with his eyes
Turned full on Helen, who despite herself,
So odd his garb and mien, could not but smile,
A thing she had not done in many a day.

Not so her father : never had his frown
Been dark as now—no doubt the fellow came
To steal his other twin. The goodwife said,
"Peace, husband, peace!" Then while the inner wrath
Was gathering to his lips, the hunter spoke.
His gaze still fastened on the blushing maid :
"I seek Josiah Willey. Long I've been
Journeying to this spot with weary foot.
But were the distance twenty times the miles
I'd travel it—and yet, can I be mad ?
Oh, no ! nevertheless I'd swear you are the lass
I met upon the Blue Ridge, and who sends
Glad tidings to her home."

Quick, while his hand

Held forth the little scrip, Josiah's pipe
Dropped from his mouth, and rising with a bound
He clasped the hunter's neck, and wept for joy.
The spinning-wheel dropped too, and off the mouse
Went scampering to his hole, while Helen grasped
The letter ; then with trembling hand she read,
Though dimly, for the tears which filled her eyes.
Nor could the mother gasp a single word,
So sudden had this joy come on them all.

XI.

Many Thanksgivings had Josiah kept
With grateful heart to God, but none like this.
The news the hunter brought now gave a charm
To everything his vision rested on—
To every sound which floated to his ear.
Although for fifty years and more he'd seen
The hues of Autumn spangled on the hills,
No Indian summer ever had appeared
So beautiful before : the maples clothed
In scarlet, and the beech-trees all in gold,

The dark green hemlock and the purple gum,
The chestnuts, and the blue jay's bugle note
Shrill sounding through the wood ; the old church bell,
Which tolled in Intervale the hour of prayer,
Wrung from his lips the cry—" How Heavenly !"
And in a Godly mood he hurried off
To meeting. Nor did Helen ever sing
So seraph-like. And when the service closed
An eager crowd did gather at the door
To hear him read the letter Martha sent.
And on the rugged faces of the men
Was gladness, and the women, too, were glad ;
Although a shade of jealousy perhaps
Crept in some hearts when Helen's eye was seen
To sparkle as the hunter took her hand
And led her to the horse block. Tall he was,—
Six feet and more,—his face the sun had bronzed
To deeper hue than any other face
Upon the green, and in his deer-skin suit
Looked every inch a man. And when upon
The pillion Helen sat, and he before,
The plough-horse curved his neck and neighed as if
With pride to carry such a matchless pair.

We need not say the cabin had a feast
On this Thanksgiving day. The goodwife spared
No pains, the chimney roared, nor in the land
Had better turkey gobbled than the one
Which, stuffed with chestnuts, on a platter lay
Before Josiah ; and the cider flowed
To many a toast. Then, when the evening came,
A bonfire marked the fulness of his joy.
The crackling blaze leaped up, and lit the stumps,
The cabin and the brook with weird light ;
And from the shadows stepped the solemn pines
To watch the scene. Then soon from Intervale
The good folks gathered, for they knew the cause
Of this rejoicing at the Willey home.
And, while the cider-cask went rolling round,
It was resolved, without dissenting voice,
That in the Springtime all would take the track
Of Putnam's Prairie schooner for the West.

XII.

'Tis May. Upon the Prairie Putnam's plow
Has done good work. Since last we saw him there
Far stretch the rows of corn, and now by night
The ear may catch the sound of many leaves
Unfolding to the dew. Once, while the moon
Upon the cabin shed her silver beams,
Putnam stood listening, for he loved to hear
The budding crop. No other sound but it
Disturbed the silence, save when now and then
A wakeful Bison lowed, or panther screamed.
• Within the cabin happy Martha watched
Beside the little crib, which now contained
Something more precious than a diamond mine ;
And as she watched did bless the April day
She met Nat Putnam by the mountain stream.

While thus the mother's heart retraced the year
With gratitude to God, the cabin door
Drew softly open, and in gentle tone,
Lest he might wake the babe, her husband spoke :

“ Oh, wife, come out ; methinks I hear a dog ! ”
She went, and by his side a minute passed,
And then another and another too ;
She scarcely breathed, and when a whippoorwill
Lit on a tree close by, she wished the bird
Were in the moon. But from the forest came
Only a panther’s howl. Still Putnam said :
“ It can be no mistake—awhile ago
A dog I heard, and nothing else.” Then both
Returning to the cabin sought repose.
But sleep came not. The thought that Intervale
Was camping near, made sport of drowsiness,
And every hour was counted ; till at length
Down the broad chimney crept the dawn. Then from
The cradle rose sweet music ; ’twas a call
More thrilling than the voice of chanticleer,
And in another moment all was life
Within the little home. Quick Putnam lit
The fire, then, hastening to the threshold, stood
Alert and eager for the faintest sound
To show that friends had followed on his trail.
Then while he listened, louder than before
Came bark of dog—a home-like “ Bow-wow-wow,”
Which Martha also heard, so near it was ;

And trembling with delight, she flew to greet,
With baby in her arms, the ones she loved.

'Twas not too soon ; already through the trees
A canvas-covered wagon hove in sight.
To tell what followed is no easy task :
Above her head the mother held the babe,
High in the air her husband tossed his cap.

Both cried and laughed, while from the forest came
A cheer of many voices. Loud the whips
Rang in the morning air, for many teams
Were following the first. Dogs, sheep and swine,
And roosters long confined, gave out their joy
In mingled chorus. On the wagons creaked.
One minute more and in her father's arms
Martha was clasped ; the infant's tiny fingers
Twisting the rugged beard in darling knots ;
While Helen and her mother clapped their hands
And let Nat Putnam hug them like a bear.

Meanwhile, around the cabin twenty-one
And ten more wagons formed a noisy ring.
The hunter, leader of the train, forgot

That he was leader ; at the journey's end
He offered play fight to the miller's son ;
And while they wrestled, he with twinkling eye,
Who smelt of herrings,—for he kept the store,—
Called out a speech ; the doctor fired a gun ;
The blacksmith and the parson swung their arms,
Like windmills in a breeze ; a score of cats
With caterwauling crowned the din, and while
They wailed, out of the miller's wagon jumped
A rat from Intervale, who scampered off
To make a home beneath the cabin floor.

But by and by came order ; goodwives ranged
Their bags and spinning-wheels, churns, pots and pans,
And brooms and babies in a row to see
If aught were missing ; while the parson took
His place upon a stump and organized
A meeting. It was long, but wisdomful.
And when it ended, like a good machine,
A town was ready to begin its life.
Each man knew all his part, and church and school
That very day had every axe at work.

But while the trees were felling, to them come

An Indian maiden, who to Martha spoke :
" I fear a cloud is gathering. Beware !
To thee, oh friend, I solemn warning give.
My tribe already see the mound, where lie
Our dead, laid open, and strange beasts among
The bones are rooting ; and my father vows
The Prophet's prophecy shall not come true
Without a struggle." Then the maiden turned
And went towards her home. But what she spoke
Was spoken against fate. " It has to be,"
Quoth Putnam. " Not for Blackhawk can we stay
Our plows and axes. And, if fight we must,
We'll fight."

And so the work went bravely on.
The pioneers, prepared for peace or war,
Looked boldly to the future. What befell
Let History relate. The Blackhawk war
Is now a memory ; but where once stood
The cabin and the wigwams, lo we find
A city, and Nat Putnam's hand has placed
Another star upon the Nation's flag.

THE END.

